

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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P 200937Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 887

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 7318

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, LA

SUBJ: MISSING PERSONS - ROD NORBERG

REF: STATE 205977

1. DESPITE OUR EFFORTS TO KEEP ROD NORBERG AT ARMS' LENGTH, WE HAVE -- DUE TO HIS PERSISTENCE -- BEEN IN RATHER CONSTANT CONTACT WITH HIM. IN FACT, HE APPEARED AT EMBASSY SOME FIFTEEN MINUTES AFTER WE RECEIVED REFTEL.

2. TO DATE, NORBERG HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PROVIDE EMBASSY WITH ANY HARD OR USEFUL INFORMATION ON MIAS, PREFERRING TO REGALE EMBASSY OFFICERS WITH STORIES OF "DEAD DROPS," "RUNS," "COURIERS," "GRAVESITES," AND MYSTERIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH INVISIBLE REPRESENTATIVES "FROM SAM NEUA." ACCORDING TO NORBERG, HIS PATHET LAO SOURCES HAVE TOLD HIM OF A "U.S. GENERAL WHO WALKS LIKE A SICK RABBIT" AND IS BEING HELD IN "SOUPHANOUVONG'S GARDEN" WITH A CAUCASIAN WOMAN POW ALSO LIVING IN THE "GARDEN."

3. JUST BEFORE RELEASE OF EMMET KAY, NORBERG CALLED EMBOFF TO WARN HIM THAT HANOI WAS GOING TO RUN PICTURES OF AMERICAN POWS STILL BEING HELD IN DRV IN ORDER TO SABOTAGE PRISONER RELEASE IN LAOS. THIS, LIKE SO MANY OTHER OF HIS STORIES, SIMPLY HAD NO BASIS IN FACT.

4. AS FOR NORBER'S "GOING INTO THE BUSH WITH A PATHET LAO
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COLONEL," MENTIONED PARAGRAPH TWO REFTEL, HE INFORMED

EMBOFF THAT HIS PATHET LAO CONTACT "CHICKENED OUT" ON THE TRIP INTO THE JUNGLE, WHICH WAS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 15. (NORBERG HAD AGREED TO MAKE THE TRIP WITH A SACK OVER HIS HEAD.)

5. NORBERG HAS ALSO TOLD US THE STORY OF "JOHN DEAN" (PARA 3, REFTTEL), THE SUPPOSED ONE-LEGGED FORMER T-28 PILOT. NORBERG CLAIMS TO BELIEVE THAT "DEAN" IS BEING HELD IN AREA 15 OR 20 KMS NORTH OF VIENTIANE. NORBERG SEEMS INTENT ON GOING OUT TO LOOK FOR "DEAN," DESPITE EMBASSY WARNINGS CONCERNING (A) HIS PERSONAL SAFETY AND (B) POSSIBILITY OF HIS BEING ROUNDLY DUPED BY LAO WHOSE BONA FIDES HE HAS NOT CONFIRMED. WE NOTED THAT "JOHN DEAN'S" NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE LIST OF THOSE MISSING IN LAOS AND THAT LAO MAY HAVE PICKED UP "DEAN'S" NAME FROM THAT OF OUR FORMER CHARGE, NOW AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA, SINCE HIS NAME WAS VERY MUCH IN THE NEWS HERE IN THE RECENT PAST.

6. NORBERG APPEARS TO BE UNDAUNTED EITHER BY THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION HERE OR BY EMBASSY'S REQUEST THAT HE CONDUCT HIMSELF WITH DISCRETION. HE APPEARS WILLING TO CONTINUE TILTING WITH WINDMILLS IN LAOS FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD AND SHOWS NO SIGNS OF WANTING TO MOVE ON TO OTHER LOCATIONS, DESPITE OUR IMPLYING THAT THIS MIGHT BE THE BEST CONTRIBUTION HE COULD MAKE TO THE MIA PROBLEM.
WHITEHOUSE

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